



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK

**U.S. ATTORNEY PRESENTS CRYSTAL KIPPER & ALI KEMP
MEMORIAL AWARD TO LAMAR ADVERTISING**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that Lamar Advertising Company was honored today as the recipient of the Crystal Kipper & Ali Kemp Memorial Award.

The second annual award is being presented during National Crime Victims' Rights Week. "This week marks a special observance on behalf of all victims of crime," Graves said. "This award honors two young crime victims whose deaths profoundly touched us all."

Crystal Kipper was an 18-year-old Gladstone, Mo., resident who was murdered after her car broke down on Interstate 29, just north of Platte City, on Feb. 24, 1997. Law enforcement officials identified John E. Williams as the primary suspect after he was arrested in a separate case, for which he was later convicted. Graves, who was then Platte County Prosecuting Attorney, was preparing to file first-degree murder charges; however, Williams committed suicide while in custody.

Ali Kemp was a 19-year-old Blue Valley North High School graduate who was murdered on June 18, 2002, while she worked at the Foxborough neighborhood swimming pool in Leawood, Kan.

"We are especially pleased this year to present the Crystal Kipper & Ali Kemp Memorial Award to a company whose contributions have not only assisted law enforcement agencies in apprehending suspects in a number of violent crimes," Graves said, "but whose unique role was pivotal in bringing the case of Ali Kemp another step toward closure."

In February 2003, a few months after Ali Kemp's death, Lamar began erecting billboards throughout the Kansas City area with a sketch of the suspect. Those billboards proved

instrumental for Leawood, Kan., detectives who made an arrest on Nov. 8, 2004, after a two-year investigation. That arrest grew out of two calls to the Crime Stoppers TIPS Hotline.

"One of the tips was generated from the billboards along Kansas City highways," Graves said. Those billboards, donated by Lamar Advertising, featured the composite sketch of a possible suspect provided by witnesses and a picture of a tan pickup truck that may have been associated with the suspect. "Leawood investigators interviewed more than 1,300 people, compared DNA samples from more than 900 people, and followed up countless leads," Graves added. "Thanks to their tireless investigation, they were positioned to take advantage of two crucial leads, one generated by the 'America's Most Wanted' television program and the other by Lamar's billboards."

Lamar's contribution extends well beyond the Kemp case, Graves noted. "Their billboards showing pictures or drawings of crime suspects have been credited with leading to the arrests of several persons wanted in local murder cases," Graves said. "Lamar's unique contribution is appreciated, not only by area law enforcement officials, but by the families of victims whose cases they help solve, including the Kemp family."

The parents of Kipper and Kemp participated in today's presentation of the Crystal Kipper & Ali Kemp Memorial Award to Bob Fessler, vice president and general manager of the Kansas City division of Lamar Advertising Company, and Brian Henry, creative director at the Kansas City division of Lamar Advertising Company.

Each year during National Crime Victims' Rights Week, the Crystal Kipper & Ali Kemp Memorial Award is presented in recognition of an extra step taken to stop those who would harm or exploit youth. "Child protection is my highest local priority," said Graves, "and this award will honor those who share that conviction and work diligently on behalf of our youngest and most vulnerable citizens."

"In recognition of their laudable work on behalf of all victims of crime, I would like to personally thank Bob Fessler and Brian Henry of Lamar Advertising Company, and present them with the second annual Crystal Kipper & Ali Kemp Memorial Award."

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow